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One hundred first Congress

Congress of the United States

Committee on Foreign Affairs

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

November 29, 1990

The Honorable James A. Baker
Secretary of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Baker:

I write regarding your upcoming meeting with China's Foreign Minister Qian Qichen. Even though China has been relatively supportive of U.S. policy in the Persian Gulf and in developing a peace agreement in Cambodia, it is imperative that the Chinese government is reminded that progress on human rights in China is key to the improvement of ties with the United States.

As Chairman of the Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Organizations, I urge you to stress the need for China to make fundamental changes in its human rights policy at your Friday meeting with Minister Qian. According to human rights monitors, the human rights situation in China has improved very little since the crackdown on the democracy movement last year. On November 24 two dissident intellectuals, Mr. Chen Ziming and Mr. Wang Juntao, were formally indicted on charges of "plotting to overthrow the government", a crime punishable by death. This is the most serious charge made to date against intellectuals involved in the democracy movement. I hope you will voice concern to Minister Qian about the severity of the sentences handed down to Mr. Chen and Mr. Wang.

I am also troubled that the Chinese government has misread U.S. and international protests for those arrested for involvement in the democracy movement as concern only for intellectuals. The plight of workers, who have received harsher treatment and punishment, should also be addressed in your meeting with Minister Qian. In particular, I urge you to press for the release of Mr. Han Dongfang, a railway worker who was the leader of the Beijing Workers Autonomous Federation. Mr. Han has been held incommunicado since the latter part of June, 1989, in Beijing and is reported to be seriously ill.

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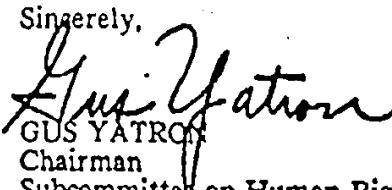
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Mr. Secretary, it would be useful to remind Minister Qian that in the waning days of the 101st Congress, the House overwhelmingly passed two bills either conditioning or denying most-favored-nation status to China based on that country's dismal human rights record. Unless China's human rights record significantly improves, Congress will return to this issue in the next session.

Your consideration of my concerns would be deeply appreciated.

Sincerely,


GUS YATRON
Chairman
Subcommittee on Human Rights
and International Organizations